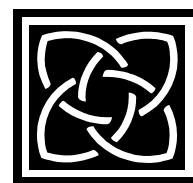




Appleby Archaeology Newsletter



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Group News

Druidical Judgement Seat

With trembling hands, last month, Martin Railton opened the letter conveying the results of the C14 dates from the Druidical Judgment Seat. Ah yes - most satisfactory.

The samples produced calibrated dates (with 95% probability) of 800-710BC and 380-180BC - so Late Bronze Age and Iron Age!

This is a great result as there are so few confirmed Iron Age sites in Cumbria. There is always an element of uncertainty, of course, but together with the evidence of the flint tools and pottery, these dates confirm that there was activity at the site in the Late Bronze Age, with continuing occupation through the Iron Age.

Summer Walks

With the warmer days and longer nights beckoning, your Committee has been giving some thought to getting Members out and about on Apparch's annual programme of summer walks.

First up is a follow-on to Stephen Walkers' inspirational talk on Nine Standards Rigg at the Members' Evening back in January. As you may remember Stephen has developed a theory that the summit conceals the remains of a Neolithic Long Barrow and he has now invited us to join him on a walk up to the site so that he can have another opportunity to convince us. This will be a really interesting day in the company of someone who really knows the area and its history.

Then in June, for members who may appreciate something a little more gentle, we've organised an evening trip to Orton to see the Gamelands stone circle. Now I must confess a particular interest in this trip as it was my idea and I shall be leading it. Not many people know this circle, as it's rather off the beaten-track, but if you've not been before, please come along and have a look. It's a terrific site in a very atmospheric location. Even better, when I looked on the map I found that it's very close to Rayseat Pike, which you may remember Stephen Walker referenced in his talk. He cited it as an example of what he believes lies hidden on Nine Standards Rigg. However, the long barrow on Rayseat Pike is fully extant, and at nearly 150m in

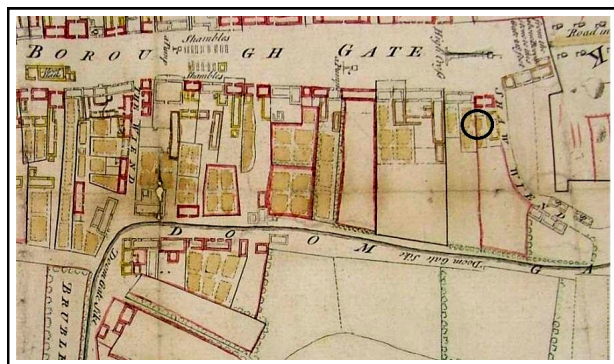
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2009 Excavation at Boroughgate, Appleby

There was a full house at our December meeting to hear Martin Railton talk about the excavation at Boroughgate. Members of the Appleby in Westmorland Society were guests at the meeting and the audience was further boosted by a number of visitors.

Martin gave an outline of the historical background with particular reference to the medieval period. Appleby, west of the river, is recognised to be a Norman planned town founded in the 12th century. The layout of the town preserves the original single-street plan focused on Boroughgate, with the castle at one end and the church at the other. A number of other boroughs were created at the same time including Carlisle and Penrith. Appleby was strategically located by the river and on an important route across the Pennines and it grew into an important trading centre whilst some of other boroughs, for example, Greystoke and Kirkoswald failed to develop.

Hill's plan of 1754 (see above) shows the original



form of the town and the survival of many of the medieval burgrave plot boundaries. There were originally 28-30 burgages either side of Boroughgate, each with a 12m wide frontage. Each plot would have had a house or shop at the front with yards, workshops, gardens and space for domestic animals behind. The original burgrave plot boundaries ran from Boroughgate to the river to the east and from Boroughgate to Doomgate to the west. Doomgate would have been the back lane separating the plots from the common land beyond. By the mid 13th century the town had developed into the main trading centre for the area and had expanded

along Scattergate. But by the end of the 14th century parts of the town were in ruin following the Scots raids. A period of peace and stability followed the Union of 1603 and in the mid 17th century Lady Anne Clifford restored the town and castle. In the 18th century Appleby grew in prosperity and a number of the original burgages became infilled. Many of buildings were constructed around a courtyard behind the street frontage.

The excavation site covered parts of two burgages between Boroughgate and Shaw's Wiend. Shaw's Wiend would have provided access to the back lane. The changing structures on the plots are seen on the Ordnance survey maps of 1859 and 1898, by which time the land was a single plot with a lean to building at the north east corner which survived until recently.

A planning application to build domestic buildings on the only undeveloped plot of land adjoining Boroughgate led to an archaeological assessment of the site. Three evaluation trenches were excavated in 2006 by Greenlane Archaeology. No definite remains of the properties or boundaries were discovered, but a number of features were recorded and quantities of medieval pottery and medieval glazed floor tiles were recovered. The tiles suggested that a relatively high status house had stood nearby. It was on the basis of this evaluation that Cumbria County Council requested an excavation of the area that would be covered by the proposed new house. This excavation, the first modern excavation in the historic core of the town, was undertaken by North Pennines Archaeology. Led by Martin it took place in September 2009.

The first stage of the excavation was to remove the 19th century outhouse and a sunken yard and then carefully to excavate down through the layers. The earliest

archaeological layer was a medieval compacted stony surface, thought to be a yard, which lay directly on the clay subsoil. A number of post holes were found which may indicate that there had been a fence or other structure in the yard. Evidence of a later cobbled yard surface associated with a possible drainage ditch was revealed. This was dated to the 17th and 18th century. Later this became a garden, seen on Hill's map of 1754, but by 1843 the site was a paddock. From the end of the 19th century until recently the land was owned by the bobbin mill on the south side of Shaw's Wiend.

The earliest artefacts were pieces of 12th to 13th century pottery found at the bottom of a medieval pit. A series of medieval cess pits were identified. Some were small

and circular and some larger and rectangular and these appeared to have had timber lining. A drawn plan of the distribution of the pits shows that they were grouped at the rear of properties

Cess pits were often placed under cellar floors or in the yards of medieval properties but smell was a problem. In towns they would have been dug out every year or two and were eventually back-filled with domestic rubbish and stones at the end of their use. The contents, a valuable fertilizer, were spread on the surrounding fields. The pits contained a vast amount of information and samples were taken from them for environmental analysis.

The analysis of the samples provided evidence of what the people of Appleby were eating in the medieval period. Cherry and bramble seeds indicated that wild fruits were being collected and eaten. Charred cereal grains showed that oats wheat and barley were being consumed along with meat from cattle sheep and pig. The river was also a source of food as fish bones were found. The bones of domestic dogs and cats were also present and may indicate that the skins were used.

Evidence of nearby metal working was seen. Tiny fragments of metal were identified from several of the pits and in another there was evidence that iron had been heated in a furnace. A wide range of objects were made from iron at this time including agricultural implements.

In early medieval times small scale smithing often took place in towns but was later pushed to the periphery of the town. because of the noise and dirt.

Over 600 shards of pottery were found and these are providing valuable dating evidence. The pottery is being analysed Bradford University and a report will be published with the results of the excavation. Most of the pottery found was from cooking pots and glazed

jugs but preliminary results have identified eleven fabric types from red grit ware to a very smooth buff ware dating from 12th to 15th century. Most of the pottery is Cumbrian ware, indicating the importance of the market in Appleby. This is the first significant assemblage of medieval pottery from the town. No pottery from the 16th

century was found but earthenware from the late 17th to 19th century was recovered from the cobbled yard and garden soil, as were fragments of clay pipes.

The excavation at Shaw's Wiend has provided a peep into the daily life of medieval Appleby. The people had a semi-rural lifestyle, harvesting wild foods whilst also cultivating crops and rearing domestic animals. Small



scale metal working was taking place perhaps to take advantage of the market focused on Boroughgate, where local pottery was also exchanged. The lack of evidence of activity in the 16th century corresponds to the contraction of the town following the Anglo-Scottish disputes of the previous centuries. The reoccupation of the site in the 17th century corresponds to a time of stability and the restoration of the town by Lady Anne Clifford.

Phyllis Rouston

Nine Standards Rigg

The Annual General Meeting of Appleby Archaeology held in January was followed by the Members' Evening when the speaker was Dr Stephen Walker. Stephen, who became a member of the group in 2010, grew up in Kirkby Stephen and has now returned to live there. He spoke on his research into *The Origins of the The Nine Standards*.

The Nine Standards are located near the summit of Hartley Fell, known locally as Nine Standards Rigg, and have fascinated Stephen for a long time. In 2008 he published his book *Nine Standards: Ancient Cairns or Modern Folly?*

Stephen spoke briefly on his documentary research and continued, using excellent slides, to consider why and when they were built.

The first step was to try and find out what was known about the monuments. He began by reviewing the documentary evidence. Historical records included maps, charters, boundary rolls and perambulations. Maps record the existence of the Nine Standards as far back as the late 17th or early 18th century, but the first mention of them appears to have been around 1138 in documents associated with the Gant family of Swaledale. It is possible that the Nine Standards were boundary markers on the contested landscape of Upper Swaledale. In 504AD there is a reference in Old Welsh sources to a battle site north west of York called "toothed mountains" and this may refer to Nine Standards Rigg with the projecting stone monuments appearing like teeth on the

horizon. The evidence strongly supports the idea that these stone cairns were not built as a folly but have overlooked Kirkby Stephen for many hundreds if not thousands of years.

The cairns stand just below and north of the summit at 605m facing north north east and they have a commanding views in all directions except to the south-east and east. They can be seen from some distance, about eight miles when approaching from the west. They are close to the watersheds of the Eden, the Lune, the Greta, the Swale and the Ure. The location in itself might suggest the cairns marked somewhere significant. Over time they have been rebuilt, most recently in 2005 when the wallers used photographic records to guide their reconstructions. The cairns have no foundations but are built on pavements and some are between three and four metres in height.

Aerial photography and satellite images identify the underlying geological feature but closer inspection of the area around the cairns seems to show this has been cleared of peat and also shows a feature that might be an enclosure. The "enclosure" has a different orientation to the cairns which may mean that it is of a different date to the cairns. It is marked by mounds and ditches with different types of vegetation. There are scree slopes to the west and dug out trenches and possible quarries to the east. There is no record of any archaeological excavation on the site. One idea suggested was this was a burial site with a possible long barrow, but without physical investigation of the site nothing can be confirmed.



A number of similar sites are known in the locality. Dates have been attributed to some but there is little confirmed dating. Evidence of earlier activity is thought to have been found at Farady Gill where the chert deposits are said to have been worked in the Neolithic (4000C-2500BC). Jack Standards is thought to be Bronze Age (2500-800BC) and a dyke from Hollow Mill Cross to Coldbergh Edge is said to be

like the "reaves" of the Bronze Age field boundaries found on Dartmoor. A gold torque found on Winton Fell in the late 19th century was dated to the Bronze age. A number of other hilltop enclosures in the region such as Carrock Fell in the Lake District and a complex at Ingleborough have been recently dated to the 3rd and 4th millennia.

Stephen concluded by looking at possible ways forward. Surveying the site is one possibility but the stony nature of the ground means that only certain methods would be possible. GPR (Ground Penetrating Radar) may provide some evidence to determine whether or not there is a long barrow present but the method of choice would be LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging). This technolo-

gy builds up a high resolution model of the ground surface and has been used at Alston where previously unrecognised archaeological features have been revealed. In the meantime Stephen will take members of the group to the site in early summer for the group to reach its conclusions!

Phyllis Rouston

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length is apparently quite a sight. Moreover, it contains the remains of three internal chambers and is located in a spectacular situation above Sunbiggin tarn. Now, I've never been here so I'm really keen to visit and propose that we start the Orton trip by meeting at the roadside beneath Rayseat and having a look at the long cairn. It's only about a mile from the road though, admittedly, with some soggy uphill walking. As an additional attraction, I've found a reference to another, tiny, stone circle, close to the road on the way from Rayseat to Orton.

Finally, accompanying this Newsletter you should find a booking form for our proposed coach trip to Furness Abbey. On the way to Furness we also propose to drop into the Dock Museum at Barrow. Furness Abbey is a very well-preserved medieval site, now in English Heritage hands. We hope to have a guide and of course the weather is guaranteed. I think we shall have a splendid day here. Best get your booking form off promptly to avoid disappointment!

Martin Joyce

Spring Programme

Gypsum in Cumbria

Tuesday 8th March

Ian Tyler

Keswick Mining Museum

Ian will be talking about the 200-year history of Gypsum mining in the Eden Valley.

Cumbria Archive Centre and the records of Appleby and North Westmorland

Tuesday 12th April

David Bowcock

Carlisle Records Office

David will describe the work of the recently-refurbished centre

Summer Outings

Walk to Nine Standards Rigg

Sunday 15th May

Meet at 10:30am at Tailbrigg on the B6270 Nateby - Keld road, parking near the wooden Bridleway signpost at NY 809 043. It should take between an hour and an hour and a half to reach the cairns. Boots and warm and waterproof clothing are advised and you should bring a packed lunch. Stephen Walker will act as contact person as well as walk-leader. His mobile number is 07766 343 871.

Evening Visit to Gamelands Stone Circle via Rayseat Pike Long Cairn

Tuesday 21st June

Meet at 6.30 at the second cattle grid to the south of Mazon Wath on the Little Asby to Newbiggin road at NY 694 068. Boots and waterproofs are advised for the excursion to Rayseat Pike, otherwise stout shoes should suffice. Martin Joyce will be the walk leader - he can be contacted on 017683 61131 for further details, nearer the time.

Coach trip to Furness Abbey via the Barrow Dock museum

Sunday 10th July

See enclosed booking form



SENDER:

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